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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC//DHO-2/REA/NMJIC-J2// PRIORITY
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RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 1593
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0315
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 1140

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STATE FOR EUR/CACEN (PERRY), INR/RA (FEINBERG)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2016

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SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: CTAG MEETING MORE STYLE THAN
SUBSTANCE

REF: 05 ASHGABAT 767

Classified By: Ambassador Tracey A. Jacobson for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

SUMMARY

1. (SBU) Representatives of six of the G-8 countries met at the Russian Embassy on February 7 to discuss counter-terrorism assistance with the GOTX during the first local CTAG meeting of the Russian G-8 presidency. Although invited and encouraged by the Russian Embassy to attend, the GOTX failed to send a representative. The Russian representatives focused on the ideological approach to defining and combating terrorism while the U.S. delegation openly disclosed current and planned programmatic efforts focused on counternarcotics and WMD. Apart from the U.S. Embassy, bilateral missions admitted to having no counter-terrorism programs in Turkmenistan; however both EU and OSCE reps shared their programs. The representatives agreed to meet quarterly and distribute a post-meeting communique (to be drafted by the Russian Embassy but cleared by all representatives) to the GOTX's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. End Comment.

RUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES: WORDS VICE ACTION

2. (SBU) Representatives from the Russian, U.S., U.K., French, Japanese and German embassies along with the EU-Tacis Advisor and OSCE Project Manager met for a one-hour Russian-hosted meeting. (Note: Italy and Canada do not have diplomatic missions in Ashgabat. End Note.) Dominating the group were the five delegates from Russia: Charge d'Affaires A.A. Krutko, First Secretary A.V. Letoshnev, Cultural Affairs Officer E. Tsybikzhapov, Defense Attache S. Shcherbakov and Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) Resident Rear Admiral Alexander Bulakhtin. The Russians read three prepared Russian-language speeches that focused on defining terrorism and countering media definitions that would exclude rebel groups in the Northern Caucasus. The Russians made no reference to Turkmenistani-specific problems or programs.

3. (SBU) All representatives lamented the absence of GOTX representation and noted that open discourse was the first hurdle to overcome if genuine counterterrorist action could

be taken in Turkmenistan. Aside from planned OSCE trainings and conferences on money laundering and terrorist financing and the USG,s EXBS program, active programs were related to counternarcotics efforts and limited to the United States and OSCE. Delegates recognized the connection between illicit drug trafficking, organized crime and terrorism.

¶4. (SBU) In response to the Ambassador,s remarks that embassies and international missions have enjoyed increasing bilateral cooperation on security issues with the GOTX, but the USG wants to see GOTX action to address TIP and drug demand reduction, Krutko offered the unscripted English-language remark that &Russia and the GOTX will sign a comprehensive bilateral anti-drug commitment to combat drug-trafficking in the next couple of weeks.8 In stark contrast to the USG,s specific program details, Krutko did not provide any program information, and framed the commitment as a step to &break up (the GOTX,s) wall of self-isolation.8

COMMENT

¶5. (C) Reminiscent of the June 2005 law-enforcement roundtable meeting (reftel), the Russians were keenly interested in the specific details of embassy programs, yet offered none of their own. At the conclusion of the meeting, Russian DAO Shcherbakov literally took Poloff,s prepared notes from her hands. Poloff attempted to explain that the Russian Embassy already had this information, but he was undeterred. (Note: Embassy DAO provided a copy of DOD programs for Shcherbakov. End Note.) Absent GOTX representation, the meeting concluded without addressing the

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three main agenda items: ideological counteraction to terrorism in response to UNGA resolution 1624, Turkmenistan,s experience with counterterrorism, and Turkmenistan,s potential needs for receiving assistance. Although the atmosphere was friendly and collegial, there was no discussion or interactive dialogue. End Comment.
JACOBSON